1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

CHAPTER I

The Small Farmers

241
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CENSUSES have laid bare the existence of two widely different types of agricultural activity in the Irish countryside. There are two widely different groups of persons whom we can tentatively designate as large and small farmers. Indeed, the statistics, if used correctly, give factual base to the divisions the Irish reckon in the countryside themselves. They remind one continually that the large and small farmers are different beings and belong to ways of life which are quite opposed.

In general, the differences are such as to present two groups of persons defined by two different ways of adapting themselves to nature and carrying on the business of agricultural production. Large farmers differ from small farmers in their techniques, in their products, in the use of the soil and the land. They differ in the way in which numbers derive support from their farms. They differ significantly in the organization of labor upon those farms and presumably in consequence in their relations with other elements of the community. Family labor characterizes the small man, hired labor the big fellow.

No one, of course, expects this to be an exact correspondence in which one gets perfect correlations in each instance between the size of the acreage and other factors. A typical small farm economy might well exist on a farm very large in area, and often does so in mountainous areas, where

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

241 463 much of the land is useless. Again, a farm small in area might be exclusively devoted to the sort of economy which is usually found on very large farms. In any single case, statistical generalities do not hold, of course. But in the large kind of correlation which a count of varying factors affords, bulk correspondences turn up with complete regularity.

241 463 162 The course by which this conclusion is reached takes one through the devious labyrinth of Free State Government statistical abstracts. In 1926, the last census year before the authors' field work was undertaken, the numbers living in country districts, "outside villages and towns with 200 or more population," made up 63 per cent of the Free State's population of almost 3,000,000. They were 1,815,496. Of the 1,307,662 classed as "occupied persons 12 years of age and over" for the whole Free State, 672,129, or 51 per cent, were engaged in agriculture. Any attempt, then, to understand the human setting of Irish farming involves an inquiry into the forces motivating the lives of well over half the country's people.

241 433 In 1926 this agricultural population produced a total output valued at £64,757,000. Industry in Ireland produced goods to the value of only a little over half that figure (£34,000,000 net output).

231 433 In the agricultural output of that year, the proportions of the various products indicate the character of the agriculture. Foodstuffs, with livestock products among them, made up the bulk of the output. Milk products accounted for £13,600,000; cattle, exported alive or slaughtered within the country, accounted for another £13,800,000. Pigs and eggs made up £9,800,000 and £6,690,000 respectively. Other livestock such as poultry, sheep, and horses accounted for the rest, in that order of importance. Wool and sundry items such as honey brought in a mere £700,000. All of these, the total output of livestock, reached a value of

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

593 and a man with many years' experience in Irish rural affairs,
428 attempt to give a statement of the generalities. They express, however, an ideal rather than an actuality.

> The average household consists of six persons [and the parents]. Of necessity not more than one could be provided for on the holding and assuming, for example, that the family consisted of two girls and four boys, the position would be somewhat as follows:
>
> 593 The eldest son would in the course of years assume ownership
> 428 of the holding. A second son might be provided with a second-
> 874 ary education and might possibly win a County Council scholarship . . . enabling him to pursue a course of engineering or medicine practically free. In the event, however, of his not being so fortunate, the thrift of the family may enable him to pursue a similar course at the university, the intervals between terms and the long vacation being spent on the farm.
>
> Some years ago medicine was the profession usually pursued provided the boy had no vocation for the priesthood. At that time the cost of his board was appreciably reduced by an arrangement through which neighbors' sons lodged together and brought with them supplies of potatoes, oatmeal, home-cured pork, in fact, provided for almost all their own food. When the boy is qualified to his own particular calling, to his credit it may be said that he denies himself many little luxuries in order to pay back the cost of his training and thus assist the other members of his family.
>
> 593 The third son either got trained in business and in due course
> 428 started one of his own, or emigrated where he could also refund the cost to his parents. The fourth son might possibly become a primary school teacher, a civic guard, a tradesman [artisan] apprenticed by his father in the near-by town, or again his family might give him enough to marry into another small holding.
>
> One of the girls received a dowry or, as they say here, she was "fortuned off" into another small holding of similar status. The second girl possibly favored nursing, teaching, business, or domestic service, or again possibly religion, or even a clerical position of some sort either here or abroad.

166 The above quotation states the generalities in terms of
● 463 upward social mobility. The influx of the country people
593

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

into the towns, into governmental, professional positions, and into the ranks of urban occupations must wait for special analysis in itself. It is not possible here to determine how great the effect of this movement from the small farms is upon the current much lamented overcrowding of the professions in Ireland. The point of interest for us is the dispersal of the farm group.

Naturally enough, this dispersal does not always occur so happily as in the above statement of the ideal. Yet the portioning off of the children and the success with which it is done is the pride as well as the duty of every farm family. A few examples will give the variations. They are more matters of success or failure to advance beyond the level of small farm life, but they show the genesis of the movement in the farm family. In a later section this subject will be dealt with in more detail. These examples, however, are typical, though the names are fictitious.

Leary of F —, a farmer with sixty acres, has a daughter married near-by with a four hundred pound fortune, and another, a nun in Mercy Convent, Ennis. Four sons have entered the priesthood, an expensive training from his point of view. A fifth is at home working, not yet thirty. Leary is a "strong" farmer, highly prosperous.

Tom Casey, K —, is a very poor holder with thirty acres of mountain and bog. Two sons and a daughter are still at home, and a bachelor brother works with him. Another daughter works for herself as a domestic servant in Ennis. One son Tom is apprenticed to a carpenter in Ennis. A daughter emigrated through the good graces of her aunt.

Michael Dunn of T — has twenty acres, but has not prospered. His two sons left at eighteen and twenty respectively to drive hackney automobiles in Ennis, an uncle there giving them a start. Another son now thirty and a daughter are still at home working the farm.

In a mountain townland, Pat Looney's father prospered, won the good graces of the landlord's agent, amassed four farms, the largest fifty acres, the smallest eighteen. He married off two

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Otway[3] describes the weavers of Drogheda in 1840 subsisting on conacre gardens (plots hired without right other than to the current crop) in circumstances of dire poverty.

O'Brien sums up his *Economic History* by concluding that the result of the first fifty years of the nineteenth century was that Ireland abandoned all pretense of being an industrial country and came to rely on agriculture to a greater extent than at any time formerly and even than in the eighteenth century. The accounts of Ireland at the time of the famine and after it bear him out. They show a very great lack of any kind of industrial activity other than agriculture.

The petty crafts of the countryside, which never gave any promise of reaching industrial proportions as those in the town centers might have, suffered a similar decline. But with them the decline seems to have come later and to have been part of the general change brought by the industrial revolution. All the supply crafts of the countryside have now come to be concentrated in the market towns. Nevertheless, through western regions, at least, local craftsmen, often with garden plots to help them eke out a living, seem to have long continued to be part of the local scene. In the novels of Carleton written just before and after the famine, many local shoemakers, cobblers, weavers, carpenters, smiths, coopers, nailers, and other followers of small trades appear. Upon them, the agricultural population depended for much of its tools and goods for local consumption. It is impossible to determine now how many of these were rural, since censuses of occupations before 1926 do not distinguish occupations in towns from those in country districts. But these men were part of the generally greater proportions of country dwellers before the rise of towns and the opening up of the railroads during the last century.

[3] Caesar Otway, *A Tour in Connaught* (Dublin: W. Curry, Jr., & Company, 1839).

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Another very great occupational change, though it does not show itself in any great numbers in census records, has been connected with the disappearance of the landlord from the western counties. A whole series of occupations clustering around the management of estates or the tastes of the local gentry and their families has gradually disappeared. Even the adoption of many of the conventions and habits, once exclusive marks of the Ascendancy, by other classes of the population has not served to stem the change.

If we fasten our attention directly upon determining what occupations are characteristically found represented in the countryside rather than in the towns in Ireland today, we get a picture of rural economy in which the followers of other occupations than farming are few indeed in the countryside. The occupations predominantly rural in Ireland are nearly exclusively those of farm ownership or farm labor. Only in recent years has there been any further development of rural pursuits to take the place of those going out with the changes brought about by modern communication and distribution of factory-made products. The chief of the new influences is not yet represented in full, even in the census of 1926. It is too recent a development. The introduction of creameries had not yet made its mark in that year. Plans for industrialization, since undertaken by the De Valera regime, had not yet even been drawn up.

To get a picture of rural life and the view of technological adaptation which it entails, we can look through the figures for a comparison of urban and rural industry in the years of the study.

Volume VI of the Irish census of population of 1926 entitled "Industrial Status" gives a view of the industries of the whole country and a preliminary view of the chief forms of industrial organization. Though the volume is largely concerned with unemployment, it also contains tables which classify those at work in the Free State accord-

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463 464 ing to occupation and employment. It distinguishes between employers (those employing persons for pay in their principal business) and employees (those working for others) and counts the latter by trade or industry or, if farmers' employees, by size of farm in acres. It further distinguishes those persons working on their own account and those assisting relatives. Persons employing domestics only are not classed as employers. Even in keeping these categories separate, the census ran into difficulties. The following statements indicate the troubles met in separating the smaller farmers from those who engaged in non-agricultural occupation and from hired farm labor.

> Large numbers of small farmers and their sons work as agricultural laborers, road laborers, etc., as opportunity offers and many described their 'principal occupation' in the census (1926) as agricultural labor or road labor. (In gathering agricultural statistics in 1927, they were recorded, however, as farmers.) This is the chief reason why the numbers of farmers, male and female, shown in censuses of population were always so much less than the numbers of occupiers of agricultural holdings as compared with the agricultural statistics.[4]

The introduction to the volume then compares occupiers and farmers from figures of 1929 and 1926 respectively, and finding the occupiers much more numerous than the farmers, particularly in Leinster, the writers conclude:

> It is evident that large numbers of small farmers in all parts of the country did not describe themselves as farmers in the census and that this was more common in Leinster than in Connacht, as more employment can be obtained on the large farms and elsewhere in Leinster than in Connacht.[5]

Thus the presence or absence of big farmers in a district seems to have an effect upon the occupational status of the small farmers, in affording them the chance of employment

[4] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. VI: Industrial Status, p. ix.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. x.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

away from their holdings but within their own area. In such cases the small farmers are both employees and employers employing their own families.

In regard to such difficulties the introduction makes the following final qualifications of its own categories of industrial status:

> As regards the numbers returned as employers, persons working on their own account, persons assisting relatives and employees, it should be explained that persons employing domestic servants only were not classified as employers, that persons assisted in business only by relatives who had no contract for wages were classified as persons 'working on their own account', . . . persons working on their own account and persons assisting relatives were classed as employees (e.g., clergymen, nuns), and finally that many employers having small concerns (blacksmiths, dressmakers, etc.) described themselves not as employers as they should have done but as persons working on their own account.[6]

It is clear that, in segregating country occupations from those of the towns, industrial status as defined in the census is less significant than occupation itself.

For the whole country, taking in all industries, there were in 1926 as totals at work and out of work over twelve years of age some 850,000 men and some 341,082 women. Of these, those employing others numbered 62,605 men and 16,509 women, a fairly large proportion for employers. About 232,340 men and 62,949 women worked on their own account, and 196,034 men and 73,062 women were returned as assisting relatives. Employees of others numbered 402,631 men and 176,324 women. The figure for men, at least, indicates that those working for others were less in fact than those carrying on for themselves and families. The same fact is indicated for women, too, but only after the large figure of those engaged in "home duties" (a class which, according to the census, belongs in no indus-

[6] *Ibid.*, p. xii.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

464 try at all) is included. At the time, 1926, the census recorded 6.9 per cent of men and 3.4 per cent women as unemployed, figures to be added to make industrial totals. The percentages were very low, and by the advent of the De Valera regime in 1931 had increased considerably. However numerous they are, they do not change the industrial pic- 471 ture very much in Ireland. Small enterprises predominate, and very little of the great developments of the machine age is present. The supply and service industries are in a definite preponderance, and in that fact reflect the country's dependence upon its agriculture and agriculturalists.

463 The Census of Occupations is quite different in purpose from that of industries and industrial status and proceeds by different counts. To quote the notes:

> The difference between statistics of occupation and industries must be kept clearly in view. . . . A person's occupation is defined by the operations he performs in earning his living: grainmiller, jamboiler, tramdriver, packer, clerk. A person follows his occupation within a certain industry or service. Some occupations are peculiar to a single industry or service, . . . others are found in very many industries and services. . . .[1]

The Census of Occupations is obviously in many ways an elaboration of that of industries. The two overlap frequently. Yet they are distinct enough to give us an alternate view of Irish industrial activity of great detail. If now we examine this view for what it will tell us of the survival of rural industry, we see again that occupations other than those of farming are very few indeed in the country districts.

463 Table 5 records the occupations of the whole country
349 classed within industries. It lists followers of occupations living in rural districts in the left-hand column and followers of those living in urban districts in the right-hand column. Weighting the figures for all occupied persons properly between towns and country districts, we find that

[1] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. II, p. 5.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463 ●
369

TABLE 5

Comparison of Rural and Urban Occupations, 1926 Irish Free State[1]

The table lists in the left-hand column, under the heading "Rural Occupation," those occupations 67 per cent or more of whose followers live in country districts or places under 1,500 population. It lists in the right-hand column, under the heading "Urban Occupations," those less than 67 per cent of whose followers live in country districts or places under 1,500 population. Percentage figures near 67 per cent are usually given; those greatly divergent are omitted. Industrial categories grouping occupations are listed at the head of the occupations. Figures for females of each occupation, and sometimes for males, are omitted if very small.

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
I. Agriculture and Fishing	
Farmers, male	Gardeners and nurserymen, 62%
Farmers, female	Gardeners' laborers, 62%
Sons assisting farmers	
Daughters assisting farmers	
Other relatives assisting, male	
Other relatives assisting, female	
Farm managers	
Agricultural laborers living in	
Agricultural laborers living away	
Woodmen	
Other agricultural labor	
Fishermen	
II. Mining and Quarrying	
Coal-mining	
Quarrying and other mining	
III. Producers, Makers, and Repairers	
a. Makers of Food	
Creamery workers, 80%	Employers, managers, 62%
	Bakers, pastry cooks, biscuit makers
	Sugar, sweet, jam makers
	Grain millers
	Other skilled food makers, including foremen
	Other unskilled food makers
b. Makers of Drink and Tobacco	
	Employers, managers, foremen
	Maltsters
	Other skilled workers
	Other makers of drink
	Makers of tobacco and snuff

[1] Based on Irish Free State Census, 1926, vol. II, Occupations. Categories are sometimes not exactly those of the census but are occasionally grouped together for convenience.

[p. 239]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

TABLE 5 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
c. Textile Workers	
Breakers and scutchers, 89%	Employers, managers, foremen
Knitters, female, 67%	Spinners, piecers, carders, winders
	Winders, female
	Weavers, 49%
	Weavers, female, 30%
	Knitters, male
	Hand-lace workers, female, 65%
	Other skilled textile workers
	Other textile workers
d. Makers of Apparel and Textile Goods	
	Employers, managers
	Boot and shoe makers, 40%
	Cutters
	Tailors, tailors' machinists, 50%
	Dressmakers, female, 50%
	Sewers and sewing machinists, female
	Embroidering, female
	Other skilled workers
	Other workers
e. Workers in Hides, Skins, Leather, not Boots or Shoes	
	Workers in hides, skins
	Saddlers, 50%
	Other makers of leather goods
f. Workers in Wood and Furniture	
	Employers and managers
	Carpenters, 57%
	Cartwrights, wheelwrights, 28%
	Sawyers and wood machinists, 28%
	Coopers, 20%
	Basket makers
	Boat and barge builders
	Cabinetmakers
	Upholsterers, coach trimmers
	Other skilled workers
	Other workers
g. Metal Workers	
Employers, managers, 67%	Foundry workers
Smiths, 67%	Motor mechanics, 30%
	Cycle mechanics
	Mechanics
	Fitters
	Plumbers
	Tinsmiths, sheet-metal workers
	Machine-tool workers
	Boilermakers, shipwrights
	Other skilled metal workers
	Other metal workers

463
369

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463
369

TABLE 5 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
	h. Electrical Workers
	Electrical fitters and wiremen
	i. Workers in Chemical Processes, Makers of Fertilizers, Soaps, Paints, and Workers in and Makers of Paper and Cardboard
	Skilled workers
	Other workers
	j. Printers, Bookbinders, Photographers
	Employers, managers, foremen
	Compositors
	Printers
	Bookbinders
	Photographers
	Printing-machine setters and minders
	Machine assistants
	Others
	k. Builders, Bricklayers, Stone and Slate Workers and Contractors
Foremen and overlookers, 75%	Employers and managers
Masons, 75%	Bricklayers
Platelayers, 75 %	Plasterers
Contractors' laborers and navvies, 74%	Slaters, tilers
	Other skilled workers
	Builders' laborers, 25%
	Other workers
	l. Painters and Decorators
	Employers, managers, and foremen
	House, ship, general painters
	Painters of vehicles
	Other workers
	m. Other Producers, Makers, and Repairers
	Watch and clock makers and repairers
	Workers in precious metals
	Electroplate workers
	Makers of bricks and earthenware
	Makers of glass and glassware
	Brushmakers
	Other skilled workers
	Workers in gas works
	IV. Transport and Communication
	a. Railway Workers
	Station masters and railway officials, 50%
	Locomotive engine drivers
	Firemen

[p.241]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463
369

TABLE 5 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
	Cleaners
	Guards
	Signalmen, 58%
	Shunters, level-crossing keepers, 40%
	Ticket collectors, checkers
	Railway porters
	Other special railway occupations
	b. Road Transport Workers
	Proprietors, managers of motor car garages
	Drivers of motor vehicles, 40%
	Drivers of horse vehicles for passengers
	Drivers of horse lorries, carts, vans, 25%
	Tramdrivers
	Tram and bus conductors
	Grooms, 53%
	Other road transport workers
	c. Water Transport Workers
	Ship owners
	Harbor officials and stevedores
	Navigating and engineering officers
	Petty officers, seamen, deck hands
	Firemen, donkeymen
	Barge- and boatmen, 40%
	Dock laborers
	Other water transport workers
	d. Other Transport Workers
	Post office sorters
	Postmen, 61%
	Telegraph operators
	Telephone operators
	Telephone operators, female
	Messengers
	Porters
	Other workers
V. Commercial, Insurance, Finance	
	Cattle, sheep, pig, horse dealers, 53%
	Shopkeepers, male, 43%
	Shopkeepers, female, 39%
	Shop assistants and salesmen, male, 30%
	Shop assistants and salesmen, female, 30%
	Buyers
	Agents and factors (coal, drapery, etc.)

[p. 242]

463
369

TABLE 5 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
	Commercial travelers
	Van salesmen and canvassers
	Hawkers of coal, vegetables, etc.
	Newspaper sellers
	Bank officials not clerks
	Insurance officials and agents
	Auctioneers and valuers
	Other commercial, insurance, finance occupations
	VI. Public Administration and Defense, excluding Professional Men and Typists
	Civil service officials and clerks
	Local authority officials and clerks
	Civic guards, 60%
	Army, commissioned officers
	Army, others
	Others in defense
	VII. Professional Occupations
Catholic clergymen, 65%	Other clergymen, 60%
Schoolteachers, male, 65%	Nuns and postulants, female, 34%
Schoolteachers, female, 67%	Christian brothers and monks
	Religious lay brothers
	Theological students, 54%
	Church officials, 50%
	Barristers
	Solicitors
	Medical doctors
	Dentists
	Veterinarians
	Midwives, female, 40%
	Sick nurses, female, 40%
	Music teachers
	Civil engineers and surveyors
	Chartered accountants
	Analytical chemists
	Professional students and articled clerks
	Journalists and authors
	Other professions
	VIII. Personal Service
Gamekeepers, 87%	Domestic servants living in, male, 60%
	Domestic servants living in, female, 58%
	Domestic servants away, male, 40%
	Domestic servants away, female, 45%
	Hotel and restaurant keepers, male and female, 25%

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463
369

TABLE 5 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
	Publicans, male, 56%
	Publicans, female, 53%
	Bar attendants, male, 46%
	Bar attendants, female, 54%
	Waiters
	Laundry workers
	Hairdressers
	Caretakers
	Charwomen, office cleaners, female
	Others in personal service
IX. Clerks and Draughtsmen and All Typists, but not in Civil Service or Local Authority	
	Heads of commercial sections of business
	Clerks, 14%
	Typists, male
	Typists, female
	Clerks, female
X. Other Gainful Occupations – Entertainment	
Race horse trainers and jockeys, 78%	Proprietors, managers
	Actors
	Musicians
	Other occupations, sport, entertainment
XI. Warehouses, Stores, Packing	
	Warehousemen and storekeepers
	Packers and other warehouse assistants
XII. Other and Undefined Gainful Occupations	
	Stationary engine drivers
	Timekeepers, gatekeepers
	Watchmen
	General and unclassified laborers, 25%
	Other and unclassified occupations
XIII. Persons Twelve Years Old and Over not Gainfully Occupied	
At school, 12–18, male, 69%	Retired from active occupation, not army or navy, 57%
At school, 12–18, female, 69%	Retired from active occupation, female, 50%
	Ex-officers of army and navy not described, 39%
	Students over 18, male, 50%
	Students over 18, female, 50%

[p.244]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

on the basis of chance expectancy any occupational class should have about two-thirds of its members in the country districts and one-third in the towns. It follows then that any occupation two-thirds or more of whose followers are still recorded as country dwellers can safely be called a rural occupation. Any occupation whose followers are less than two-thirds country dwellers can be called urban.

In the table, therefore, occupations 67 per cent or more of whose followers are rural are listed in the left-hand column. They are called rural occupations for our purposes. Those occupations which have less than 67 per cent of their followers residing in the country districts are listed in the right-hand column. They are called, for our purposes, urban occupations. In some cases the percentage of the followers of an occupation who are country dwellers is given for reference, particularly where it is near the critical percentage, 67 per cent, but in most cases, where it is not close to 67 per cent, it is omitted.

In actual number the followers of non-agricultural occupations in the countryside are not a small army. They are 249, 930 persons, to compare with 658,800 agriculturalists of one sort or another. Of this army the largest single total is to be found among the "other producers," that is, those not listed in the recognized census industries, such as transport, communications, trade and commerce, the professions, or "personal service." There are 194,969 "other producers" in the country districts today.

A glance at the left-hand column of the table shows that there are practically no characteristically rural occupations left other than agriculture and the small occupations of fishing, coal mining, quarrying, creamery working. Breaking and scutching and hand knitting are still country occupations, but their followers are few. The rest of the textile workers are characteristically townsmen today. Tailors and shoemakers and woodworkers, even carpenters, are towns-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463
369 men today, overwhelmingly so, though among carpenters quite a few rural ones still survive. Smiths and employers in smithing and other metals businesses, many of whom are presumably smiths employing a few hands, often their sons, are still country dwellers characteristically. Masons and foremen and overlookers of construction and building are still country dwellers, as are contractors' navvies and platelayers. Except for the smith, therefore, there are no characteristically rural artisans left outside the building trades.

Those in the building trades or in construction, in the west at least, are not highly skilled men at all, not even the masons. They are largely laborers and landless cotters who work for local authorities as stone breakers and suppliers of gravel and broken rock for road construction. They are often farmers' sons who get work off the farm whenever they find work is to be had. Yet the local mason who puts up stone houses in the countryside, and the petty contractor ready to get up a crew of local boys for any sort of building, are still characteristically rural dwellers and part of the rural scene.

In transport industries the only occupation which is even nearly rural in complexion is that of postman, for obvious
[205] reasons. The local post office is usually a small crossroads shop in the western counties. The post office workers are members of the rural communities they serve.

In commerce, in spite of the two currents at work, no occupation is characteristically rural. Dealers in animal produce, however, come closest to it. Yet most livestock and animal produce dealers are now townsmen, often town shopkeepers as well. The country shop at a crossroad is still important but not characteristic.

Civic guards, clergymen, and schoolteachers make up the only other occupational classes in the country who still live in the rural districts and are part of rural communities.

Three other occupational classes, according to the table,

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

are also characteristically rural still today. These are gamekeepers, race-horse trainers, and jockeys. These are, of course, employees of the landed gentry who follow the cult of the horse. They are more often to be found now in the eastern midland counties than elsewhere today.

In County Clare rural occupations other than agricultural are equally rare. There the figures necessitate a slightly different definition of rural districts, since certain towns smaller than 1500 possessing local self-government are included in the town areas. But, by the same procedure as before, we can divide the proportions of total population into rural population in the county and then classify the occupations in Clare according to their rural or urban character.

In Clare, of course, there are no very large cities. The county counts 5,023 males and 5,522 females in town districts, and the overwhelming majority are country dwellers as one would expect in the agricultural west. The total rural districts in 1926 numbered 45,048 male inhabitants and 39,471 female. As befits a largely agricultural area such as the county, occupations and industries show a little different distribution. The population is for males 89 per cent rural and for females 88 per cent rural. Those gainfully occupied in rural districts number for males well over two-thirds of the total population, for females only one-fifth of the total, so that for men, at least, the numbers recorded as unoccupied are negligible. The low figure for occupied females is due to the inclusion of housewives among the unoccupied. The rural-urban ratio upon which we can build expectancies of proportions of followers of occupations to be found in towns or countryside is 92 per cent for males and 84 per cent for females. As for the whole country, female occupations are found only in the towns.

The table for Clare (Table 6) repeats practically exactly the same story as that for Ireland as a whole. In fact, the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

TABLE 6

463
369

Comparison of Rural and Urban Occupations, 1926, County Clare[1]

The table lists in the left-hand column, under the heading "Rural Occupations," those occupations 89 per cent or more of whose followers live in country districts or places under 1,500 population or in places having local self-government (a special case). It lists in the right-hand column, under the heading "Urban Occupations," those occupations less than 89 per cent of whose followers live in country districts or places under 1,500 population. Percentages near 89 per cent are given; those greatly divergent are omitted. Industrial categories grouping occupations are listed at the head of occupations. Occupations represented in Table 5 which are not listed here have so small a following in County Clare that they are included among "Others." Figures in parentheses following occupations give the total numbers for County Clare.

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
I. Agriculture and Fishing	
Agricultural occupations, male, 99% (23,572)	Fishermen, 84% (199)
Agricultural occupations, female, 99% (5,307)	
II. Mining and Quarrying	
Mining and quarrying, 92% (21)	
III. Producers, Makers, and Repairers	
a. Makers of Food	
	Employers, managers, 60% (21)
	Bakers, 50% (82)
	Makers of foods, female, 61% (13)
	Others, 20% (80)
b. Makers of Drink and Tobacco	
	Makers of drink, 99% (12)
	Makers of tobacco (0)
c. Textile Workers	
Textile workers, male, 95% (43)	
Textile workers, female, 87% (15)	
d. Makers of Apparel and Textile Goods	
	Employers, managers, 70% (48)
	Tailors, 67% (180)
	Bootmakers, 65% (141)
	Employers and managers, female, 70% (14)
	Dressmakers, female, 71% (304)
	Milliners, female, 50% (43)
	Others, female, 50% (13)

[1] Based on Irish Free State Census, 1926, vol. II, Occupations. The Census does not divide occupations within this category between rural and urban districts for Clare. It gives merely the total for the category of occupational classifications.

[p. 248]

463
369

TABLE 6 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
e. Workers in Hides, Skins, Leather, not Boots or Shoes	Saddlers, 67% (45)
f. Workers in Wood and Furniture	Employers, managers, foremen, 71% (38) Carpenters, 84% (491) Cartwrights, 40% (27) Others, 60% (66)
g. Metal Workers	Employers, managers, 84% (56) Smiths, 85% (199) Fitters, 67% (31) Plumbers, 50% (11) Motor mechanics, 40% (91) Other mechanics, 80% (69) Others, 80% (112)
h. Electrical Workers	Electrical apparatus makers and fitters, 80% (87)
i. Workers in Chemical Processes, Makers of Fertilizers, Soaps, Paints, and Workers in and Makers of Paper and Cardboard	
j. Printers, Bookbinders, Photographers	Compositors and printers, 0% (16)
k. Builders, Bricklayers, Stone and Slate Workers, and Contractors	
Contractors' laborers and navvies, 91% (2,054)	Employers, managers, foremen, 88% (136) Bricklayers, 40% (5) Plasterers, 42% (28) Masons, 87% (114) Builders' laborers, 43% (121) Others, 78% (88)
l. Painters and Decorators	Painters and decorators, 43% (65)
m. Other Producers, Makers, and Repairers	Others, 50% (50)
IV. Transport and Communication	
a. Railway Workers	Railway officials not clerks, 84% (21) Locomotive engine drivers, 67% (34) Firemen, 33% (16) Porters, 60% (45) Others not clerks, 60% (41)

[p.249]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463
369

TABLE 6 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
b. Road Transport Workers	
	Proprietors, managers, foremen, 50% (21)
	Motor drivers, 50% (231)
	Drivers, horse vehicles for passengers, 60% (13)
	Drivers for goods, 50% (96)
	Others, 50% (6)
c. Water Transport Workers	
	Dock laborers, 9% (54)
	Boatmen, 88% (116)
d. Other Transport Workers	
Postmen and post-office sorters, 89% (190)	Messengers, 50% (39)
	Porters, 13% (63)
	Others, 80% (5)
V. Commerce, Insurance, Finance	
	Cattle, sheep, horse, pig dealers, 65% (69)
	Shopkeepers, 62% (574)
	Shopkeepers, female, 55% (341)
	Shopkeepers' assistants and salesmen, 50% (378)
	Shop assistants, female, 54% (263)
	Commercial travelers, 40% (25)
	Van salesmen and canvassers, 50% (15)
	Insurance canvassers and agents, 50% (19)
	Others not clerks and typists, 47% (83)
	Others not clerks, female, 80% (10)
VI. Public Administration and Defense, excluding Professional Men and Typists	
	Civil service officers and clerks, 68% (102)
	Local authority officers and clerks, 59% (78)
	Civic guards, 82% (260)
	Army officers, 5% (42)
	Civil service officers and clerks, female, 86% (93)
	Local authority officers and clerks, female, 30% (15)
VII. Professional Occupations	
Catholic clergymen, 90% (120)	Other clergymen, 69% (13)
Theological students, 90% (32)	Christian brothers and monks, 35% (14)
Mental attendants, female, 91% (37)	Nuns and postulants, 50% (227)
Schoolteachers, male, 86% (200)	Solicitors, 40% (10)
Schoolteachers, female, 91% (322)	Medical doctors, 77% (46)

[p. 250]

463
369

TABLE 6 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
	Dentists, 13% (8)
	Civil engineers and surveyors, 79% (28)
	Other professional, 63% (90)
	Other professional, female, 75% (33)
	Mental attendants, 50% (33)
	Registered midwives, 75% (4)
	Sick nurses, female, 77% (121)
	VIII. Personal Service
	Domestic servants, male, 83% (63)
	Domestic servants living in, female, 78% (1,312)
	Domestic servants living out, female, 75% (451)
	Hotel and boarding-house keepers, male, 78% (45)
	Hotel keepers, female, 50% (157)
	Publicans, 70% (229)
	Publicans, female, 75% (145)
	Bar men, 75% (76)
	Barmaids, 76% (113)
	Waitresses, 67% (15)
	Laundry women, 60% (27)
	Charwomen, 30% (24)
	Others, female, 40% (11)
	Hairdressers, 30% (19)
	Others, 57% (57)
	IX. Clerks and Draughtsmen and All Typists, but not in Civil Service or Local Authority
	Clerks, all typists, male, 45% (153)
	Clerks, all typists, female, 57% (82)
	X. Other Gainful Occupations — Entertainment
	Entertainment and sports, male, 59% (42)
	XI. Warehouses, Stores, Packing
	Warehousemen and assistants, 75%, (23)
	XII. Other and Undefined Gainful Occupations
	Stationary engine drivers, 80% (45)
	All others, 50% (33)
	All others, female, 60% (41)
	General laborers, 48% (387)
	XIII. Persons Twelve Years Old and Over not Gainfully Occupied
Retired, 87% (637)	Ex-officers, ex-soldiers, etc., 69% (137)
At school, male, 87% (3,504)	Students over 18 not elsewhere recorded, 83% (92)
At school, female, 86% (3,482)	Not yet at work, male, 77% (281)
Others, male, 90% (1,620)	Not yet at work, female, 75% (336)
Engaged in home duties, female, 88% (17,657)	Others, female, 83% (3,602)

[p. 25]

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463 dropping away of rural occupations other than agricultural
369 is even more marked. Yet the smith, carpenter, mason, building-contractor, employer, and foreman, and their navvies and laborers are characteristically rural producers. Only they of all the occupations and crafts survive in rural districts, with the exception of the very few textile workers. But the figures for the weavers of Clare are somewhat deceptive, since one of Clare's few industries was a tweed factory in Sixmilebridge, a town just too small to be excluded from the rural districts. Actually except for them the rural weaver is nearly entirely gone.

In Clare, as in the whole country, two professional occupations are still rural. Priests and schoolteachers are country dwellers. And theological students, characteristically "strong" farmers' sons destined for the priesthood, are rural too. That female mental hospital attendants should be
[743] characteristically rural in Clare is a statistical accident due entirely to the fact that the County Mental Hospital happens to be just outside an urban boundary.

The statistical record restates the fact that today in Ireland no less than elsewhere social differentiation on the basis of occupation and technique is an urban matter. The countryside has been relegated entirely to the agriculturalist. Only very few others occupy the countryside with him in the face of the extreme division of labor of modern industrial civilization. The Irish countryside is an extreme example of the relegation of the rural districts to agriculture. Nevertheless the statistical record shows us that a few of the rural artisans survive. It demonstrates too that a few men of professional status still serve the rural community. Even the crossroad shopkeeper is an important rural figure still, though he does not count a sufficiently large number to distinguish himself statistically as a rural occupation.

Occupational and technological differentiation is thus not entirely lacking in the country districts. Such division

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

of labor of a non-agricultural character as still persists in the country communities is very simple. Yet it is an interesting part of community life. It affords status to local artisans in the lives of the small farmers.

The families upon the separate farms are not, of course, entirely self-dependent units. We have already had occasion to examine the kind of coöperation called cooring, often based upon the extended family which flourishes in the country districts. Such reciprocal aids in ordinary farm work are only one part of the fabric of services which one meets among the country people. Another part can be distinguished. It takes account of what elementary specialization in local techniques and handicrafts exists. The man or woman skilled in some particular branch of work is called the "handy man." The handy man is an important person at the times when his or her special skill comes into use. The local reputation of such a specialist is sufficient to keep the recognition of his skill alive between periods of use and to afford him a definite status. In the country districts of Clare even full-fledged artisans, appearing in census records as full-time carpenters, smiths, and the like, sons of fathers and grandfathers who followed the same trade, are not much more than local specialists.

Many a farmer is still a jack-of-all-trades, ready if need be to turn his hand to shoeing his horse or resoling a boot or building himself a house. Only where the products of factory and foundry have become deeply entrenched in farm life, embodying skills of distant workers abroad, do local goods and services represent techniques the small farmer cannot come close to emulating. For example, the smelting of iron is a process completely unknown, and neither the local blacksmith nor the farmer can do more than rework the iron they have at hand. But the blacksmith and the farmer both can do it, though it is the blacksmith who has the greater skill. In the countryside the techniques and the

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463 products of specialized labor are open and visible to everyone, and in some measure they are part of the lore which each man learns. Not all the men come to practice them, but they have all seen them or heard them described, and they are part of the fund of conversation, precedent, and value which is common coin among the people of the community. One's special craft does not segregate one from one's neighbors or take one outside the community here. Rather it is one's mark or sign, one's reputation and status within it.

This is the case particularly where, as here, most of the craftsmen of one sort or another have always depended upon a plot of land or a kitchen garden behind their cabins, with perhaps a pig or a cow or two, nearly as much as they depended upon their craft. By this dependence they were never segregated from the rest of the local population, either physically or occupationally. They too were agriculturalists of a sort and shared farmers' tribulations. Just as the farmers knew something of their techniques, so the local craftsmen were nearly always proficient in the ways of agriculture. Today in rural Clare the handy man may be anything from a veterinarian or bonesetter to a building contractor. He is always without benefit of law, apprenticeship, or formal training, and merely follows a technique of which everyone knows something. The farmers are ready to pass upon his skill, to debate the technical points of his work, to build up or tear down his reputation.

463 467 874 Down to the time of the World War, in the last generation, the close acquaintance the small farmers had with the special skills of the countryside was reinforced by the interest the farmers had in putting their sons to a trade. They could often find a place for them thus. In the towns even today formal apprenticeships, into which the farmer must pay for his son to enter, still flourish.

The statements one can get about the local specialists,

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at least of those of the better recognized trades, are direct 467
and intimate. The following words illustrate something of 874
the character of apprenticeship. A small farmer is speaking
of his own knowledge of local conditions:

Before the war there used to be about twenty shoemakers in 463
the neighborhood, but now they've mostly gone away or are in 467
the towns. One of them went into Ennistymon. Whenever a 874
farmer wants a strong pair of boots even yet, he will not go to
a shop but he would go to the shoemaker. It wasn't always the 294
case the son of a shoemaker would follow the trade because
there was good money in it. With it they would buy a farm
and so for his sons, and they would go to farming. If a farmer
had a crippled son, he might send him to the shoemaker to
teach him the trade. Papers were signed that bound the boy
for three years to the tradesman, and then the boy would go
live with the shoemaker. At first he would be taught to tap,
then to stick, then to sew, and the last thing would be to cut.
If a boy left before the three years were up, no one would give
him a job, and no other tradesman would take him on to teach
him a trade. The father had to give twenty pounds to twenty-
five pounds to teach him. At the end of three years the boy
was given his indenture papers which meant he could set him-
self up any place in the country or, if he had not enough money
to do that, he would work as a journeyman for someone else
and his papers would give him the right to do it.

There were a great many tailors and smiths too. The time
of work was three years. A boy who was a cripple might be
sent to tailoring. He was taught three years and then he could
set himself up. It was the easiest of them all to get along with
because it required no money to start with. In the old days the
tailor used to come to the house and stay for a week or so and
make clothes for all the men of the house and go to the next
house after.

The smiths trained boys also. When I was small, a cousin of 463
mine had a forge below on the road and any wet day all the 874
boys used to gather there and watch and talk. I started out by 326
blowing the bellows and then doing other things until finally
I was as good as anyone. If I had the material I could make
shoes, and I always shoe my own horses.

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463 326 554 Of these local specialists only the smith survives in any strength today. He shares with the mason the admiration the country people feel for physical strength and prowess. Perhaps it is this that made the more sedentary occupations of weaver, shoemaker, and tailor of less prestige. Thus the crippled son, as the quotation says, might be put to one of them.

463 294 The tailor was often a peripatetic. He moved around from house to house and community to community where he was known, living and eating among the family. He was made welcome, not only as a maker of clothes but also as a carrier of gossip. Today the few tailors who survive in the country districts are petty cotters with only a memory of their trade. The few still active ones have retreated to the towns. Most of the farmers' clothing is now shop-bought and factory-made.

463 286 [283] The weaver was perhaps the most sedentary of the local craftsmen. He is the one who has failed to survive even in the towns. The women of the farm families carded and spun the wool into yarn until home spinning died out, and broke and scutched the flax for linen, but the weaver made it into cloth. He spent all his days indoors, moving from one side of his loom to the other in a small room heavy-laden with fluff and lint. The farmers seem to remember most strongly the unhealthiness of the life, but they tell one also of the weavers' arrogance when their skill was in great demand. The following is the kind of description one can still get, the first part of it discoursing on weavers in general and the second relating the history of the local man:

> In the old days the weaver might have enough work to keep him busy for four months and, when you went to see him, he would put you off and tell you to come back in a fortnight for your goods. It wou'd be no good for you, none in the world, if you didn't take a bowl of butter and a few dozen eggs to him

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

as a way of getting him to start on your yarn in a hurry. If you didn't, he would not do it until he got ready. They were independent, all right, and then when they were finished, you had to reach down into your pocket and pay for what he did. There used to be a lot of weavers here, but they are all gone now. The women have got out of weaving the wool.

A weaver here, Paddy Seán R—, was a very fine fellow though he drank a lot. You cannot blame him for that because his job was a mean one and bad on the health. He worked to keep his mother out of the workhouse and till the day she died he would not let her go there. Wasn't that a decent thing for him to do? Afterwards he went to Galway and then he came back here and as an old man he died in the workhouse. But wasn't it a decent thing he would not let his poor old mother go and her going up the streets of the town every morning collecting the urine from the people who lived in the house [to use for bleaching].

These three occupations were the meaner ones in the eyes of the country people. It was not that they degraded their followers. Rather it was that they were intrinsically of less value than the more robust crafts of outdoor life. Something of the sexual dichotomization of labor was involved in this attitude equating sedentary, house-bound pursuits with the feminine spheres of activity.

The chief exponents of the robuster, more masculine crafts within local ken were the carpenter, the mason, the house builder, and the smith. But there were many others. Between the landless or "backward" cotters and laborers, who might turn their hand to anything, and the small farmers, who were themselves occasionally forced to turn to harvesting abroad or to road-mending and stone-breaking at home, there were as many specialists as there were activities in which special renown and skill could be attained. In fact, the development of local skills seems restricted only by the limits of the *matériel* which peasant life requires.

Other local experts were the thatcher, the cattle doctor or "vet," often a herdsmen with a lifelong experience of

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463 cattle, the butcher, expert at pig killing and skinning (pigs are regularly butchered on the small farms), the expert at rigging the great hayricks which stand in the farmers' haggards, and, lately, the threshing machine experts. All these robust, outdoor specialists are male. The feminine sphere of life does not seem to have bred such specialization. Yet many women were known also for their special skill at this and that branch of women's work and were consulted accordingly. Nevertheless, the only traditionally feminine crafts to develop and flourish apart were witchcraft and midwifery.

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A local craft or proficiency seems to develop out of some special crucial activity in local life. A local craft or skill of the kind that meets us here builds up directly out of social life itself. It is a development of habitual association about any person who gradually builds a reputation for a particular proficiency. The proficiency may center around some traditionally established technique of peasant life, like the weaving of homespun and shawls, the clothing of the small farmers, or else it may build up about local conventions having no direct economic value. Dances, gambles, and other entertainments and ceremonies of local social life may likewise afford areas in which a special skill gains recognition, gradually to grow into an occupation.

Thus the local specialists included fiddlers, singers, poets, storytellers. In the last century, in a day of great poverty and much displacement from the land, each of these skills gave an occupation to many wanderers along the roads of Ireland. Their followers found employment in the rural communities among the small farmers. Even itinerant dancing masters once flourished in the country districts during Carleton's day.[8]

The existence of other conventions leads likewise to the

[8] Students of Gaelic culture have described these artists very amply. See Robin Flower, Daniel Corkery, *et al.*

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

habitual utilization of persons specially skilled in them. 463● They are the ones to whom the small farmers habitually resort. Thus legal sanction might become necessary for matchmaking as soon as land reform made the farmers legal owners of the farms they transfer in the match. But a long experience of court tangles and reprimands by judges was necessary to establish the licensed solicitor as the channel for negotiation. The handy man who was a legal expert and had a fine copyist's hand in the country districts flourished quite a while longer, and flourishes occasionally even now. In the country districts, down to the present, these local specializations were acquired through personal association of one kind or another with former specialists. Very often skills are deemed hereditary in the eyes of the country people. But actually they are acquired as often through gradual development of habit begun out of interest and imitation as by inheritance and parental instruction. They are passed on quite often to others than sons. The following extract from field notes illustrates the development of such skills:

The local man who cuts hair here is a handy man; the man Donnolly, who goes about and kills pigs for his neighbors is a handy man. When we asked, we were told by Flanagan that Donnolly was the butcher and handy man. They butcher only sheep, goats, and pigs. Cattle would be killed by the town butcher. Flanagan said Donnolly was not a true butcher, for he did not serve his time. If they want a boy to be a butcher, they send him to town and pay a fee and he would be trained there. Then they take out papers binding him. Donnolly said he learned it when he was a young man, but now that he was getting old he was not doing it any more. It takes several men to hold the pig, put a hook through the mouth, and kill it with a heavy blow on the head. They take it home, lay it on a table, and take a knife and cut it up. Then it is hung up, salted, and cured. Afterwards the butcher is given a bottle of stout for his work, as well as some fresh meat, while the husbands who helped get nothing. 463 874 231

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463 The country people distinguish between these men who are handy men and have had no formal induction into their trade and those who are legally recognized as "tradesmen." But the line of formal distinction is thin, and more recognized in the abstract than in the concrete. Thus in the story of the development of one local mason, one can see that the difference lies rather more in the kind of remuneration than anything else. One farmer's account of the "tradesmen" of his knowledge led him on as follows:

> There are other men who are carpenters and masons who are handy men, but they usually work for pay because the job might take several days, and no neighbor could stay away from his work with a friend for that length of time. Donovan is a mason and he taught himself. He built his own house and several others. A man cannot build a house because he would not know how to do it. Donovan is a very intelligent man. He has a terrible head on him.

437 476 463 465 That the difference of remuneration is seized upon by countrymen as the distinguishing mark came to the authors' notice again and again. The handy man is the local resident who fits into the local pattern of courtesies, barter, gifts, as in the case of the butcher, described above, who got his reward in the shape of the meat shoved under his arm. In cooring, of course, one never pays. In any act of "friendship" and alliance in a familistic setting no formal remuneration of monetary payment is ever present. We have already seen that it is only at the crucial period of family reorganization, when the whole system of relations between members undergoes change, that any considerations of money enter the schedule of rural services and rewards. The same absence of money payment is the point of distinction here. It distinguishes the relations between the men of a local community and one of themselves who is "handy" through special experience from those between formal client and tradesman. Money payment is the mark of the outsider;

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

gift and barter that of the fellow in the local community.[9]

For example, O'Sullivan, the "vet" of Rynamona, already mentioned, was a herdsman who did his cattle doctoring in his spare time. His services were always at the call of his neighbors. He seems to have been fairly good at his practice. He was quite widely sought after. His interest led him even to an experimental turn of mind. He said he often cut up cattle to see what killed them. In every description of him given by his neighbors they insisted he never took a penny for his work.

The many bonesetters, whose help is much sought after, reject payment too. They are so numerous that a local dispensary doctor in Clare could complain that he had never been trusted to set a fracture but was consulted only to make sure a fracture had occurred. Even townsmen always emphasized in justification of local custom that the bonesetter accepted no money. Legal requirement has something to do with it. Statutes protecting legitimate doctors and veterinarians from this sort of competition exist and can be invoked, but that is only part of the story. The greater part of the matter lies here: The handy man is part of the local community. He is one of the farmers who has specialized, and thus he is within the pattern of reciprocal services and mutual aid.

Such a figure as the blacksmith, who follows a recognized trade, and is paid for it accordingly, distinguishes carefully between the services for which money payment is possible and those which cannot be so remunerated. In the following case we can see that he distinguishes nicely in this tact indeed, for he can be paid in other communities for services for which he cannot accept payment at home. A blacksmith in North Clare is telling of himself in paraphrase:

[9] Weavers, carpenters, thatchers, and masons may, of course, receive payment for their work, and do so. But such payment is made usually either where a farmer is in no position to return favors or does not want to enter a permanent relationship of cooring. The methods are alternatives.

463 He is called the blacksmith by the people around; his place
465 is called the forge. He is also the local horse doctor. He has
326 about a hundred and twenty horses which he shoes for the
232 surrounding farmers. His father, whose place he has now taken, is too old to work and so he does it all.

A rainy day is the time when the farmers bring their horses in to be shod, for it is then that work cannot be done on the farms. That's the time he will be busy all day, and it is very hard work. The shoe must be made to fit the horse. You work the fire with the bellows and put on the special coal for the forge. Usually the man whose horse it is will work the bellows for him.

He buys the iron in long strips and makes it up himself. The price is six shillings for a new set of shoes and three shillings for refitting an old set.

He keeps account of what the farmers owe him and usually between the first of November and the beginning of the new year they come in and pay. They pay once a year and he never sends an account or presses for the money. If they are poor people, he never charges and overlooks it until they have the money to come in. They come from about four miles around and he has the same ones year after year. He never charges them for looking at the horses. His father was a great horse doctor, better than himself. He was great for growths, sore teeth, or internal trouble. From miles around the farmers would come to have their animals treated. No charge was ever made for this of any man who had shoeing done with him, but a man from a distance would be charged. His father took a trip once through Galway and Connemara curing the ills of horses and he charged enough to pay his expenses and a little more.

463 Here we see the same consideration at work as in the case
465 of the handy man carpenters and masons. When the exer-
431 cise of skill is expanded to a point where it fills the work-
754 man's working existence, clearly setting him off from the farmers, the farmers recognize his role as a fit subject for money payment. When his work is only the occasional avocation of one of their own kind, they do not. For this reason the midwife always differed from the local nurse. The mid-

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wife got her reward in presents, gifts, and whiskey, but not in money. Money, however, would be proferred to the nurse.

That the factor of payment in money should be crucial is really the cloak of the set of dispositions arising from habitual relations. In the local community the handy man is not paid, since, like "friends" and neighbors, he is one of themselves. Since he is one of the countrymen, he is caught within the system of much the same habitual relations of reciprocal service and mutual aid which make up cooring in agriculture. 463 465 571

To see this point, we must describe the action of the local community in respect to the work to be done once again. Cooring is a form of reciprocal exchange of goods and services. One old fellow described it aptly when he said that it meant that for a day of work given you would receive a day in return. We have already seen its connection with familism and the extended family. But besides cooring, there was another form of the custom known as *meitheal* (mihil). The word *comhair* (coor) referred to the reciprocity, the word *meitheal* to the band of men and teams acting together to perform a task. On various occasions when work beyond the capacity of cooring families was to be done, a *meitheal* of men or women or horses could be made up. 476 571

As described by the old people who still remember its heyday, the *meitheal* rested on a foundation slightly different from the reciprocity of cooring. The work was done by a gang of local persons got up for the purpose through the wish and custom of the local inhabitants, but without expectancy of individual return in like measure.

Bands of men and women were got up in rural communities by *meitheal* for the following purposes, of which the authors heard record:

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

476 would be waiting outside to whisk them away or to have a dance.
571 Then when they ground the oats, they had a quern and the men and women would come together and each take a turn at grinding so it was not tiring and they would have a big supper of spuds and milk for all of them before they would go. Then they would get together for the carding and spinning before the thread was taken to the weaver. The young women might be carding and the old women spinning and the *meitheal* of [535] girls would work away. They would get a dance when they would be done.

All the above description of close concert and deeply imprinted habitual work relations among the members of the local communities in the framework of the organization of behaviors of age and sex depict the now dead past. The same activities today, though certain techniques are different, bring out the same picture of work relations in an emotionally charged unison among persons of similar status within the community. The present-day hay harvest is very little different, though mowing machines are used. The great hayrick is still built in the same setting, and still calls for celebration. Everyone still waits for a signal from the hayrick rigger, a personage of considerable importance on such a day.

476 The unison of working on oats harvest with flails is gone.
571 But in its place is a threshing machine, and its owners come around and a local crew is got up out of the local men. The
● 463 same jollities still reign. In all this our chief interest is not
554 in changing custom. Rather it is from this kind of observation that a new conclusion arises. The factors of differentiation about skills and techniques in the rural communities give rise to statuses of the same kind as before, statuses based upon the development of a specialty by a member of the local community which is recognized and valued within the habitual activities of his fellows. Here is an opportunity to see the embryonic form of division of labor and development of occupations in terms of the life of a community. It is a continuous process.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

The formally recognized artisans of the country districts represent a sort of halfway stage in this process. The blacksmith is the most important of them, through historical associations and because his skill suffers so little loss of demand. Others, such as the weaver and tailor, are in process of disappearance; others perhaps in process of emergence. It is the incorporation they experience into the habitual relations of the group that determines their presence or absence and determines whether or not their skill shall develop or be lost.

Take, for instance, the few cases of persons who return to their native communities in the countryside from abroad. They find adjustment extremely difficult. The "returned Yank," if he has been long away, is declassed and to an extent deracinated. This is true of all his behavior, through all his relations with those from whom he went. The process of reabsorbing him is slow and painful. None of this shows itself better than in his inability to fit himself in again technically and occupationally. If he takes a farm, he is better off because he is independent. But otherwise he must learn a different kind of organization of work relations, a different tempo, and he must wait upon the slow development of the relations with his fellows which alone can give him full occupational status among them. This is the reason why innovations of all kinds seem to be infinitely slow in conservative rural life. Ardent agricultural reformers all too often fail to recognize this enforced tempo of habitual working relations in agriculture and suffer disillusionment accordingly. In fact, it is the rock on which most well-meaning reforms or innovations break. Change and innovation do come about, surprisingly quickly from one point of view. But they proceed through social relations; they do not overthrow them. They come about through a new habit's achieving a compatibility with old ones.

In the Irish countryside the organization of the community upon an occupational basis can be understood not

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463 571 in terms of such considerations as income, wealth, or skill, or any such factors, but in terms of the place and function of the persons specializing among their fellows. It can be understood in terms of social relations and the organization of habit. Status based upon technical differentiation is built up out of personal relations in the work experience of the community members.

476 571 621 If then we take inventory of the kinds of goods and objects which make up the *matériel* of peasant life, and draw up such an inventory to illustrate for us the connection between social relations and these goods and objects, we can construct a series of charts which connect community life and the exchanges and uses of goods, services, and objects in one comprehensive view.

In such a chart those goods and services which come to the farmer from those within his own community come to him in connection with traditional social relations uniting fellow community members. They are the ones transferred under the pattern of cooring: through "friendliness" and non-monetary reciprocal obligation.

Those goods and services which come to the farmer and his family from without the community come to him in connection with more recently developed non-traditional relations uniting him to persons outside the community. They fall into quite different patterns of activity. Likewise any person whose occupation makes him both a member of the local community and part of the outside world, by virtue of his relations extending beyond, is also in a position of oscillation between the first and the second relationships.

For there is a continual attempt to extend the pattern of cooring, as with all local familistic and communal obligation and sentiment, outward on the part of the farmers, and a continual extension inward on the part of outsiders of other patterns of relationship. Much of the enduring pattern of town and country relationship evolved in Irish

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

[4,275]

TABLE 7

Relations of Farmers and Non-Farmers in Three Rural Communities in County Clare

The table which follows is a chart of relationships between farmers and non-farmers in the rural communities of Clare. It lists those of different skill or habit with whom the farmers have relations. Those who fall under the pattern of reciprocities, gifts, and cooring, and the goods and services they provide the farmer, appear in one list. Those who fall under other patterns, who do not figure in the obligations of cooring, are listed in another. At the right of each item in each list is a word or phrase characterizing the initiation of the actions taking place between the farmer and the non-farmer in the course of the provision of the goods or services described.

Read another way, the lists arrange in two groups all the local specialists with whom we have been dealing. They show us that the differences are to be found in social relations, not in goods or services rendered or any other factor. All the specialists of whom the authors got information in the country districts are here. The first list describes the specialists whose relations to the farmers are "internal" to the community. The second list describes those persons who connect the farmers with the outside world and are thus "external." List I gives those who enjoy superior prestige and local standing, whose contacts with the community proceed through the heads of families, the adult men, and who are capable of initiating action among them. In that limited sense only, they are dominant over the farmers and make a higher class. List II gives those who share inferior prestige and local standing, who form cliques with the "boys," and who are not ordinarily capable of initiating action among the adult members of the community except in a course of communal action employing their special skill. These are a lower class in the country districts by such definition.

This configuration of factors reveals the lines of relationship within the community and those extending outward from it.

The reader may judge for himself how close the connection is between the familistic system of farm life and the structure of the rural community.

List I

Extra-Familial Relations within the Local Communities, Internal

Occupation or Techaical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations [1]	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services [2]
Weavers	Homespuns, shawls, cloths, blankets		
Tailors	Clothing		
Carpenters	Furniture, houses, buildings		

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, in each case this consists of gifts and cooring.
[2] Unless otherwise indicated, in each case the farmer commissions the labor.

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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Smiths	Farm implements, horseshoes, tools, repairs	Gifts, annual payment, and cooring	
Shoemakers	Boots, shoes		
Thatchers	House thatching		
Hayrick experts	Hayrick building		
Masons	House building, sheds, walls		
Wall builders	Walls		
Whitewashers	Limewashing of houses, sheds		
Water diviners and well diggers	Finding and building of wells		
Threshing-machine operators, owners	Threshing	Payment, gifts and cooring	Farmer commissions labor and machine and pays hire
Midwives	Attendance at childbirth		
Bonesetters	Broken bones		
Local "vets"	Treatment of sick animals		
Local "doctors," wise men or women	Treatment of sick; magic		
Domestic servants	Household aid	Wages only for outsiders not kin	Farmer hires and pays hire, otherwise kinship relations hold
Agricultural laborers, employees of big farmers	Occasional aid in agriculture		Either party requests aid
Gravekeepers	Records of grave locations, tending of graves	Wages by priest, gifts and cooring from farmers	Unobserved
Slate quarrymen	Building and roofing slates	Unobserved	Unobserved
Sextons	Tending of churches	Wages by priest	Unobserved
Limekiln and lime burners	Fertilizer	Gifts and cooring from local men, payment for outsiders	Unobserved

[EP-276]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

[p.277]

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services

List II

Extra-Familial Relations with Local Persons Extending Outside the Local Communities, External

Special Cases, Occasional Relationship

Tinkers	Asses, pots, pans, repairs	Occasional trade at the door	Tinker makes rounds
Dealers, hawkers, feathermongers	Odds and ends, small trade articles. Feather mongers buy feathers from farmers	Occasional trade at the door	Dealer makes rounds

Habitual Relationships

Crossroad shopkeeper	Supplies liquors, foodstuffs, tobacco, sundries not bought in town. (Most trading of staples done in towns, however.) Collects eggs and butter for sale to produce dealers	Farmer an habitual client, purchasing on long-term credit. Relationship overlaid with obligations of "friendliness," involving reciprocal gifts and occasional advances. Barter significant only in the shopkeepers' acting as depot for eggs and butter sales	Relationship habitual over long term (see other columns)
Civic guards, (police) officials and uniformed men (*Gardaí Siochána*)	Local protection of person and property, apprehension and prosecution of misdemeanor and felony. Informally, police settle disputes, report grievances, give amateur legal advice, and gather census data for governmental departments	By law, civic guards must be neither members of the communities in which they are stationed nor related in it by marriage. They are instructed to maintain close rapport and very friendly relations with local people, and seem to succeed. They go in for much sport with the local young men and boys. They are attached to local barracks but, if they are married, maintain homes in the local community	Assigned to stations on departmental orders

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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Agricultural instructors, horticultural instructors, poultry instructresses, etc. Permanent officials, employees of local authority, county councils, and members of government departments	Instruction and demonstration through experimental plots, prize contests and schemes, assignment of grants, evening lectures, etc.	Agricultural instructors of all kinds make home visits and hold classes locally but have large districts and are often townsmen. Informal contact with farmers slight	Instructor either pays a visit of inquiry or is called upon by the farmer for his advice and aid; farmers make inquiries at central offices
Land commission officials and staff	Division and regulation of land holdings provided by land law in breaking up former large estates, often affording occasional employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Land commission proceeds officially to estate division; farmers petition for increase of holdings at local offices
Commission of Public Works officials and staff	Provision of public works and relief works in connection with drainage, conservation, government projects, supplying occasional local employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Public works commission proceeds officially to put a project into effect
Local government authority, County Council, officials and staff:			
a. Rate collectors	Collection of rates, taxes, land annuities	Make collections in person, most frequently at farmer's house, though also by post. Usually owe jobs to local influence and are most often of the farming class, but collections are large and contacts not wide	Rate collection proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council

[p. 278]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
b. Road engineers, foremen, overseers and staff	Maintenance of roads through direct labor or through contracts with the farmers for supply of local quarry stone or paving materials. Relief work and road building an important source of employment of young men	Permanent officials employees of the local authorities, the County Council; foremen, overseers, and "gangers" often chosen from the farming community; much local influence exerted through county councillors	Road work proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council
c. County councillors	Local political representatives on local authority. In practice present local needs, wishes, and grievances, smooth the local administration of governmental bodies, and carry out the official duties of the County Council, not delegated to permanent staff	Elected by voters of rural electoral districts through universal suffrage of all citizens over thirty years of age (1935) in periodic local government elections. Have very often been crossroad shopkeepers or influential local big farmers; nowadays, however, are often small farmers as well. Depend for election upon canvassing, personal contacts, and attention to constitutents' business, though political party endorsement is not unimportant	
d. County Board of Health, officials and staff, local dispensary doctors, nurses, and home assistance (relief) officers	Investigation and report of cases in need of assistance, relief, etc., and provision of same	Employees or appointees of local authority; usually townsmen, and not members of the local community. Their duties, however, demand that they maintain friendly contact and acquire considerable local information	Farmers petition Board of Health or County Council or apply at dispensaries

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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Big farmer	Occasional employment of local young men; occasional aid to small farmers and local purchase of corn, vegetables, animals, produce	Of a higher class and wider contacts than the small farmers; most often a townsman by culture and even by residence. In the countryside, close informal contacts with others of his kind over a wide area; interest in fashionable recreation and sport. Contacts with small farmers often friendly but usually few, except where big farmer is active politically	
Cattle and produce dealers	Purchase of produce and livestock, providing chief monetary income of small farmers	When not townsmen, whom the farmer meets only at periodic fairs and markets, these men are usually big farmers. Buy "from the land" (that is, from individual farmers not gathered at the local fairs and markets) very rarely; butter and egg dealers nearly always buy through crossroads shopkeepers	

[p.280]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Parish priest and curate and other clergy	Religious leadership and moral control. Regulation of personal conduct and family behavior. Settlement of conflicts and disputes. Recommendation of "characters" before the outside world. Regulation of formal beliefs and attitudes, supervision of education in the interests of the accepted *mores*. Priest supplies ceremonial and cultural leadership and takes an active part in nearly all recreational and cultural activity, along with the schoolteacher, in country parishes. Only at times of high ceremony or special devotion, as at marriages, or in pilgrimages and retreats, does the small farmer make use of town churches, though he and his wife often contribute to them	In country districts today formal religious relationship seems to be superseding older paternalistic dominance of parish priest. Little informal contact except in the case of young curates in local sport. But the priest still commands greatest respect and reverence and, in many cases, the love of his parishioners. He is still the local court of appeal and the arbiter of local custom. He is consulted a great deal by both men and women. His parishioners are jealous lest he overstep his sphere of authority, particularly in politics, yet they concur in granting him obedience in everything else. Nevertheless the older magical power he possessed once is gone. Today he is often superior to the small farmers in wealth and education, and is not one of them. His more usual associates are other clergy, big farmers, and townsmen	

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8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

another guise. They are controls upon the system. 182
They are unconscious patterns of human action 554
whose social function is to ensure conformities and 565
to enforce cohesions against internal disruption and external defection. Much of the fate of human beings, both at their own hands and at those of their fellows, conforms to the controls the community exerts in response to the system of customs and values by which it builds itself and in which it ensures its preservation.

Tragedy, for example, lies in the fate of one 463 ●
romantic human type in rural Ireland. In the last 178
century before the introduction of railroads and the growth of towns, each local community had its local artisans. Tailors, weavers, carpenters, shoemakers, smiths, followed their lifelong trades and supplied local needs. Open any account of rural Ireland before the last quarter of the last century, such as the tales of William Carleton, and you will be rewarded with a full-blooded picture of this lusty crew. Their crafts were very primitive, but their place was sure. Since then, nearly all of them, except the smith, their peer, have been swept away before the skill of townsmen and factory. These men supplied their neighbours, lived among them, were an integral part of rural life. When poverty struck too deep, they became peripatetics, like the wandering singers, scholars, fiddlers, spalpeen labourers, petty hawkers and beggars who swarmed the roads of Ireland. The world of fairy-tale was

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

178 not remote from the farmers who knew these men.
463 Rumpelstiltskin, in a Gaelic dress, was at one's very doors.

In remote communities some few of these survive. Where they do, the community can still make use of them. Commissioning them follows a traditional pattern of gifts and courtesies little resembling conventional monetary commerce. Their skill descends, like the farmer's farm, from father to son; it is 'in the blood'. Their surplus children must disperse to towns and in emigration. For theirs too is a familistic world.

178 Unless they marry within their own fast-
463 diminishing numbers, they too must have land and
556 fortune. Now and again one of them rises in the world. He acquires land, he sets aside a fortune, he marries sons and daughters on the land. Year by year, his trade goes into the discard, till one fine day he is a full-fledged small farmer.

463 But such upward mobility is rare and difficult.
554 Economic change has swept his skill aside. The local artisan is more often a landless man, with nothing but a garden patch. The services he performs, however indispensable, do not give him equality with his neighbours. His standing is low, though his person is welcome. A farmer might 'put a son to a trade', perhaps, and often did not long ago. But it would be the lame son, the one not 'suited to the land'.

So today one finds broken remnants of this local

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

craftsmanship scattered in cabins here and there through the countryside. The mere memory of their trade may be all that still remains to them to tell one that they are not the petty cotters they seem to be. They have not married, or if they have, without a fortune to transmit, they can find no wives and husbands for their children. Or here and there the countryman will point out the shells of their houses; "The family all died out of it", he will explain.

For the pressure of social standing is a powerful force, even in such a setting. Rather than admit an inevitable decline into the status of a landless labourer, they must 'die out of it'. One's standing, we remember, is one's blood. If they cannot amass a tangible representation of that blood in the dowry, they cannot marry. Neither alliance nor continuance can be theirs.

Even if they do succeed, and merge by marriage into the farmers' commonality, they bear a trace of a different origin yet a while longer. Change is slow where lines are tightly drawn; even peasant society knows its parvenus. And if dispute and anger flare up to strip life to its essential core, what insults do we hear? The countryman 'throws up' to his fellow, not his face or his manners or his animal likeness, in a wild *chameau* or *schwein*, but his descent. He damns him with the reminder of 'carpenter' or 'weaver blood'.

Strange as this epithet may seem to us, it brings

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

463 554 578 an adequate, instantaneous response. The psychologist knows that expressions of anger, like any other emotion, are conditioned within particular social systems. And here the Irish system works, in its own fashion, to draw and to reinforce the inevitable distinctions and discriminations of social life.

522 From this fact springs comedy as well. Joke and fun play round this central theme. A good deal of old custom and traditional pastime cluster here. The picturesque buffoonery of the 'strawboys' —privileged masqueraded figures whose mock-dangerous invasion of the wedding feast has been dignified to represent a last remnant of a primeval bride-capture—is better explained thus more simply. Such symbolism as the gaiety of Shrove Tuesday, when in Clare, at least, young men beat loudly on the doors of those unmarried women who took no husband through the Shrovetide, is still direct enough.

For comedy and laughter soften the sharpness of social controls. They are the velvet glove that clothes the iron hand.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

226 to him by old fishermen at from £30 to £100, so that the loss of this industry must have told considerably on a poor community such as this. The primitive method which he found in use on his visit to the islands he describes in full as it was explained by Michael Halloran, the 'king'[1] of Inishshark, a veteran harpooner, who had just killed his nineteenth fish a few days before.

"I had been told that these sun-fish generally took from sixteen to eighteen hours, and frequently longer, to kill; in fact, I have heard it sometimes took two days, so naturally felt considerable interest in the gear used for the purpose. The king brought with him his trusty harpoon, which, to my mind, looked a most antiquated arrangement, especially designed to cut out of a fish, instead of holding it. I could not see a whale-boat or anything like one, so inquired where the boat was, and was shown an ordinary square-sterned boat, about 16 feet in the keel, which had nailed on her starboard bow a piece of wood about 1 foot long, with three small notches, or scores, barely half an inch deep, cut in it. I found out that these notches or scores were all they had to run the line through, and that when a boat fastened a fish, it was a pulling match between our friend the shark on one hand, and sixteen men on the other, a regular case of 'pull devil, pull baker'! Such a thing as a bollard head to take a turn of the line round seems never to have entered their heads."

226 501

463 In addition to fishing and farming, the other occupations are fish-curing at the station recently established by the landlord, Cyril Allies, Esq., J.P., who resides on the island, and personally superintends it, and the trades, represented by a boat-builder, a blacksmith, a shoemaker who imports his leather from the mainland, a tailor, who still adheres to the old method of measuring his clients without a tape, using instead a sheet of paper, on which the several lengths are recorded by "snips," or notches cut with the scissors; there is one weaver who makes use of a rather archaic form of hand-loom, four men who, on occasion, act as sawyers, extemporising a saw-pit in the nearest convenient spot by the aid of trestles, and using to mark their lines a cord blackened with the ashes of straw or shavings, and finally, a fiddler.

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[622] [1] In answer to an inquiry of mine relative to the position of king, Mr. Myles Joyce, National Teacher of Bofin, writes:—"The title of king is not hereditary in the island. There is at present a man removed something beyond his neighbours in the way of education and position, who is, *par excellence*, the king; and to whom all persons who want any information about the island or its history must apply."

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

Ireland. Barrett, Burke, Carey, Joyce, M'Andrew, Walsh, and probably Williams (if it be, as is alleged, a form of Mac William or Mac Quillin). 551

(C.) The immigrants from Ulster come next, amongst whose descendants are said to be the O'Donnells, Connells, Doghertys, Gallaghers, Geraghtys, Reillys (from Cavan), and perhaps M'Loughlins.

(D.) The Mac Cormicks came into the district in the reign of James I.

(E.) Last come names of English origin, the most ancient of which seems to be Bingham, dating from the reign of Elizabeth. Tollet, and probably Dixon, are names of descendants of the Shane settlers. The other English names are of shorter standing, and some of them may really be anglicised local surnames.

The names of the English settlers signed to the petition to Sir Henry Bingham, sometime in the reign of Queen Anne, are Higginbotham, Maxwell, Dennistoun, Linney, Langford, Tollett, Houston, Parker, Gamble, Calwell, and Low; of these, Tollett is the only one now found in the parish, if Gammell be not a corrupted form of Gamble.[1]

IV.—SOCIOLOGY.

1. *Occupations.*—Excluding the inhabitants of the little town of Belmullet, in which most of the tradesmen reside, the people are, as a rule, either fishermen or farmers, or they combine both occupations. There are a few large holders and proprietors, but the majority of the farms are of small size. These holdings are but poorly fenced, a frequent cause of dispute. Fences are usually earthen or turf, but on the islands dry stone walls, such as are seen in Aran, are common. The principal crops are barley, oats, rye, and potatoes. All the farming is rude and primitive. Spade labour is practically universal, the spades being of modern form, as the old "gowel"[2] or "gowel-gob," a two-bladed or forked wooden spade formerly used here, has long been extinct. 463 241 [351] [412]

In 1834 there were only 3 ploughs and the same number of carts in use in the Mullet: now (1895) the number of ploughs is 30, and of carts 63. [407] [493]

[1] Though these settlers are spoken of as English by the various writers who have mentioned the colony, yet the majority of these surnames appear to be Scotch.

[2] A specimen of this curious agricultural implement is figured in the Catalogue of Antiquities of the Royal Irish Academy.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

and among the farming population a new roof is hardly ever covered with thatch. The country thatcher finds employment in patching, not thatching.

The erection of such simple houses as I have described did not call for the services of specialists. When the need arose the collective skills of a whole community were available, and one can readily see how prescribed methods were handed down in any particular area. 'The custom on such occasions', wrote Lord George Hill[1]—he is speaking of Donegal in the years before the Great Famine—'is for the person who has the work

FIG. 15. Thatching tools. (1) Needles, the upper one for hay or fir ropes. (2) Mallet. (3) Trimming knife. (4) Rake. (5) Spurtles for stappling and patching. All from Co. Down except the last, from Co. Meath.

to be done to hire a fiddler, upon which all the neighbours joyously assemble and carry, in an incredibly short time, the stones and timber upon their backs to the site, men, women and children alternately dancing and singing while daylight lasts, when they adjourn to some dwelling where they finish the night, often prolonging the dance to dawn of day'. Like all work done in common, the thatching too was regarded as a sort of festival. In the Aran Islands 'from the moment a roof is taken in hand there is a whirl of laughter and talk till it is ended, and, as the man whose house is being covered is a host instead of an employer, he lays himself out to please the men who work with

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 40.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

X

PLOUGH AND SPADE

STRONG arms have been the Irish labourer's passport to labouring jobs overseas, and it may be recalled that the word 'navvy' derives from the canal-diggers or navigators, many of them Irish, who opened the waterways of industrial England. Later it was Irish labourers who built the first railroad tracks of North America. Those arms were toughened by spade-work in field and bog, for the Irish spade is much more than a gardening tool: it was, and still is in backward areas and in the boglands, an implement for field cultivation and for cutting turf. The small field pattern of all except the most fertile regions is in part a reflection of this historic fact. An acre or two and often less in area, the tiny hillside fields are a measure of spade work just as the wide prairie wheatlands mirror the multiple plough or the mounded garden plots of an African village are the mark of women's work with mattock and digging-stick. Even in the deep-soiled lowlands where the plough is now universal the observant eye, still more the viewer from the air, will pick out the narrow ridges made by the spade faintly showing, as in a palimpsest, through the more regular pattern of wide plough ridges. In hilly country, especially in the west, the spade is still in common use in the fields, and the traveller moving about Ireland in spring, when the potatoes are being planted, will notice an astonishing variety of spades in use. Even in districts where the plough is universal the spade may still be pressed into service to deal with stony patches or awkward corners, and I have seen it supplementing the plough in another way by being tied on to a lea plough to convert it into a double-sided drill plough.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XV

HOME-MADE THINGS

UNTIL the agrarian and industrial revolutions broke up economic self-sufficiency nearly every material need on the small farms was satisfied by the work of the family and the local community. Houses, furniture, food, clothing, simple implements and tools were home made or home produced. The most important specialist was the maker of edged tools, the blacksmith who thus occupied a special position in the community. His forge, customarily placed at a cross roads near running water, was never locked and became a rallying centre for idle men on wet days and for dancing in the evenings. His strength and skill were proverbial and magic powers were attributed to him and to the forge water. The smith was the first person to be invited to social functions. Not being a food producer he was, like the seers and later the priests, entitled to tribute of corn and first fruits. When a beast was slain the head was the perquisite of the smith. The ancient laws prescribe in detail the allotment of the various parts of the carcase to different offices, and the smith's right was maintained down to recent times. George Petrie, the nineteenth century antiquarian, is reported to have said that he remembered the time when a smith might have 50 or 100 heads of cows and pigs pickled in his kitchen.[1] Other craftsmen were itinerant because they could not be supported by the work available in any one district, and the last

[1] See Stephen Gwynn, *The Fair Hills of Ireland* (1906), 219. The method of dividing a carcase is thus described about the year 1600: the head, tongue and feet to the smith, the neck to the butcher, two small ribs that go with the hindquarters to the tailor, the kidneys to the physician, the udder to the harper, the liver to the carpenter and sweetbread to he that is with child. *C.S.P.* (*I*) (1601–3), 684. Dr. Johnson refers to the custom in the account of his journey to the Western Isles: cf. Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 171.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

463 326 survivors of these wandering folk are the tinkers, sworn enemies of the farmers but useful in many ways to the farmers' wives. Though miscalled gypsies they are of native Irish stock and have little, if any, Romany blood. Numbering between 5,000 and 6,000 but declining, they now find little scope for their traditional skill as white smiths but subsist mainly on collecting scrap metal and dealing in horses. Down to recent times their [273] services were in demand for making and repairing the stills in which home-made whiskey (poteen) was manufactured. [554] Weavers and tailors as well as tinkers were despised by farming folk as 'travellers', whereas the smith was held in high esteem.

463 178 Most of the home industries depended on wood and other plant products, natural or cultivated, and on the skin and hair of animals. Nearly all these crafts are now dead or dying and their products, perishable by nature, are either gone or fast disappearing. A few skills live on, others survive in children's pastimes or in the memories of old people. The unwritten lore of [824] the countryside included a vast store of information on all the [825] varied trees, plants and animals, birds and fishes which in times past played their part in the lives of the people. Nearly every [861] species had its practical, medicinal or magical uses, and through careful observation, empirical knowledge and a wealth of poetic fancy, a vivid interest in the world of nature was maintained and passed on from one generation to another. Much of this lore has been lost with the decline of the Gaelic tongue and the spread of formal education and book-learning. The [871] country school must conform to a clerk-breeding curriculum designed to meet urban demands. The destruction of woodland and the debasement of standards of living which followed the adoption of the alien potato and the consequent famines had serious consequences on home crafts. Then mass-produced goods came to drive out many products which depended on a discriminating knowledge of local materials. Thus barbed wire has taken the place of its rustic prototype—a hay-rope strung with thorns—and binder-twine has killed a dozen varieties of home-made ropes and thongs. The economist might think of them as bonds tethering rural communities to the soil, but to the sociologist they imply spiritual as well as physical links with mother earth.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathtubs.

Crafts

Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man. Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced. Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrace villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally, and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

ported on the sea only by thin canvas. Most men are able to make pampooties for themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and 40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however, because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their softness.

In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century men of several families guided vessels through the east sound to ports on the mainland. Then it was customary to place lookouts at the high points of Inis Beag to scan the horizon for masts of approaching ships, and often several canoes would race miles out to sea in order to be first to contact a potential customer. The Terrace villager who still plies the trade seldom contacts likely vessels now, and more often than not his services are refused once he rows to a ship, what with modern charts and navigating instruments. Piloting is still very much alive in the memories of the folk, and one of the popular genres of folklore is the humorous anecdote dealing with real and imagined experiences of pilots. One of these concerns a crew fishing in the east sound which was hailed by the captain of a passing schooner. Although not a pilot, an old member of the crew claimed that he was and climbed aboard, and the captain agreed to hire him after he said that he knew the sound and coastline well. Soon after, the ship struck bottom "with a great bump," and the enraged captain shouted, "I thought you said you knew all the rocks in the sound.", to which the islandman replied in a quiet voice, "I did, and that's one of them." The same old man in another tale earns the job by boxing the compass in Gaelic for the captain; the humor of this story lies in the fact that the captain does not know Irish, and the islandman, who in turn does not know the points of the compass, simply recites terms of reference[2] for kin in a rhythmic manner.

One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person discovers wrack, he establishes ownership by placing a stone atop it or by carrying it above high water mark, and no one else will claim it. Some islanders wander along the shores at dawn seeking what objects may have washed in during the night, especially timber, and those who habitually engage in this pursuit are known disparagingly as "wrack-boomers"—so poor that they must depend on salvage. During the two world wars, the economy of Inis Beag was bolstered by the immense amount of wreckage which drifted in from torpedoed ships, and the islanders still reminisce about particular visitations of flour, planks, and other

[2] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

at breakfast and lamb, if available, at supper, and the family goes out only to attend mass. Many homes are decorated then for the 12 days, with cards received and sprigs of holly placed on windowsills and fireplace mantels and crepe paper and balloons hung from the ceiling. More visiting among relatives is done between St. Stephen's Day and Epiphany than at any other time of the year, and guests are treated to cakes and drinks, which include liquor.

Whereas the folk during the Christmas season are the most optimistic and expansive, they are the least so for the three or more days following the death of one of their number. Work halts until after the burial of the deceased—"out of respect for the body"—and subdued talk focuses on death and salvation and the tribulations of life on earth. It is at this time that the masochism of the islanders is most in evidence, and they are most prone to discuss the teachings of the church, to reveal doubts concerning the afterworld, and to bemoan their own sinful lives. In evaluating the career of the person who has just died, an attempt is made to explain the cause of his demise, and both natural and supernatural causes are considered. Most deaths are attributed to the natural causes of old age, illness, and accident; but death also can come as the result of God's will and the actions of the Devil and malignant pagan forces, such as witches of the evil eye and ghosts. The immediate mourning for one who dies before the age of 40 years is deep and prolonged, particularly if small children are left with only a single parent, and it is believed that "the good die young." One of the most disliked traditions in Inis Beag is that of formal mourning for a year, during which time social activities for close relatives of the deceased are curtailed severely; they cannot attend parties, sing, dance, or play music in their homes, and men must reduce in number their visits to the pubs. Life is so dull as a matter of course, so the complaint is, that placing restrictions on what few social activities are available makes it almost unbearable.

When a person dies, his body is "waked" in the house until taken in procession to the church during the late afternoon of the day following death. Another procession escorts the coffin to the cemetery early the next morning, after it has stood the night unattended near the altar. How many folk attend the wake and compose the two processions depends on the number of the dead person's kin, his prestige status, and how well he was liked. The "laying out" of the corpse for the wake is done by close female relatives of the deceased; they wash the body and powder its face, put on the clothes or habit, and prepare the bed on which the corpse will rest. A man may be attired in new white bawneens and *crios* and a woman in her wedding dress, but it is becoming more common today for the body to be clothed in a purchased brown habit. On the breast the hands are crossed and rosary beads entwined in the fingers, and the corpse is covered up to the chest with a white sheet which later is used to wrap it up in the coffin. The manufacture of the coffin usually is assigned to one of the canoe and furniture makers, who assembles it crudely with unpainted boards and delivers it the night of the wake or the following morning.

The wake now is a solemn occasion in most of Ireland, and is attended for the purpose of praying for the soul of the dead and sympathizing with the relatives of the deceased. But until recently it was a gay affair, merrier than a wedding,